

From: Masterman Gary
Sent: 17 July 2008 15:38
To: Jones David (Legal Services Manager and Inquest Liaison Officer); Sachs Richard
Cc: Armstrong Ann; Lewis Glyn; Hodgkinson John; Haines John; Gambhir Anil; Board Tim; Hoad-Reddick Adam; Lavelle Lynn; Porter Martyr; Wood Peter; Kay Peter; Raut Videshnandan; Smith Robert (Hip Centre); Moham Aslam; Purbach Bodo; Browne Anthony; Clough Timothy; Rae Paul; Hemmady Mukesh; Morris Debra; Buck Parks Michael; Green Ray
Subject: TED Stockings and Orthopaedic Surgery
Importance: High

Dear Mr Jones & Mr Sachs

Following a recent coroner's case the Musculoskeletal Division was criticised for our thromboprophylaxis policy that states that lower limb patients that stay overnight or longer should be given TED stockings (a compression stocking to aid venous return). The policy states this as this is advised by NICE guidance and international gold standard thromboprophylaxis guidelines (ACCP) don't recommend TED stockings (referred to as GCS or graduated compression stockings) instead favouring drugs: low molecular weight heparin, fondaparinux or warfarin. The coroner found that we followed best practice as we treated the patients with low molecular weight heparin and warfarin (and accepted that this was appropriate) but advised us to remove the referral to TEDs from our policy as we could be open to actions if we have a policy that we do not follow.

In addition the Consultants here are not in favour of TED stockings due to a lack of evidence that they are effective but good evidence that if fitted incorrectly they can increase risk of DVT. As such we are not issuing TEDs to any of our patients at the moment and this situation is unlikely to change.

What we have therefore is a policy that is based on NICE guidance that none of us believe to be best practice but what we want is a policy based on best practice and which is good for the patients - that is to rely on thromboprophylaxis that has good evidence of efficacy and to reject the use of TEDs in line with international recommendations. It was surprising to many that NICE included TED stockings at all given the lack of evidence that it is where we are at. The Health Commission is likely to inspect us to see that we are doing thromboprophylaxis risk assessments although the detail and timetable of this is not available as yet.

The reason that I have been asked to contact you is to see whether this will be acceptable to the Trust from the views of Legal Advice and Quality and Safety. Although not legally binding? NICE guidance carries sufficient weight for us to consider the position that this will leave the Trust in should we take our proposed course of action but we feel that the current position puts patients at risk and doesn't protect us from litigation any more.

We have attached the policy, NICE guidance and the ACCP international guidelines for your initial perusal. The orthopaedic guidelines start on page 14 to page 26 of ACCP]. Please contact me when you need to discuss further so we can amend our policy to remove TEDs if possible. We have a fracture neck of femur pathway ready to be introduced apart from this issue so we would be grateful if it could be considered with some urgency.

Many thanks

Gary

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07/2008